# GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
# EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
# LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:972
ANSWERED ON:06.03.2002
FACILITIES TO PILGRIMS
HARIBHAU MAHALE

**Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:**

(a) whether the Government propose to provide certain facilities to the adherents of other religions who visit other countries on pilgrimage;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

## Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH)

(a) Sir, Government provides facilities to Haj Pilgrims, Kailash Mansarovar Yatris and pilgrims to some religious shrines in Pakistan.It is the constant endeavour of government to improve and upgrade facilities for the pilgrims.

(b) The details are given in the Annexure.

(c) Does not arise.

ANNEXURE TO LOK SABHA UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 972 FOR ANSWEER ON 6.3.2002 REGARDING FACILITI PILGRIMS

1. Haj Pilgrimage

The primary responsibility for the welfare of pilgrims during their stay in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia rests with the Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. In consultation with the Saudi authorities, the Government of India provides assistance to Indian pilgrims during their stay in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia as a Welfare measure. For this purpose, the Government deploys a number of doctors, nurses, other paramedics and supplies medicines for the use of pilgrims. It also deputes administrative staff to assist in the general welfare pilgrims.

Subsidy amounting to Rs. 12,000/- is provided to pilgrims performing Haj through the Central Haj Committee for air travel from India to Saudi Arabia and back.

2. Kailash Mansarovar Yatra

The Kailash Mansarovar Yatra, along the traditional route across Lipulekh Pass in Pithoragarh District of Uttaranchal, is coordinated by the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) and conducted with the assistance of various Central and State Government agencies. Kumaon Mandal Vikas Nigam (KMVN) arranges boarding and lodging for Yatris on the Indian sideMEA provides Rs. 3,250/- per Yatri to KMVN to partially offset the expenditure incurred by the Yatris. Government provides free medical inspection and assistance, and security and escort cover upto Lipulekh Pass; insurance cover and communication links for the duration of the Yatra. A Liaison Officer is attached to each batch of Yatris. The Delhi Government provides free stay to Yatris at Ashok Yatri Niwas in New Delhi for 4-5 days during their onward and return journey.

3. Pilgrimages to religious shrines in Pakistan

Certain logistical facilities are provided to group of pilgrims visiting Pakistan in accordance with the provisions of a bilateral `Protocol on Visits to Religious Shrines - 1974.` These include facilitation of grant of visa, transport arrangements and liaison by Indian High Commission while the pilgrims are in Pakistan.